



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre

Ottawa K1A 1L1

F-1166407

PROTECTED B

MEMORANDUM TO THE MINISTER

PASSPORT DIGITAL SERVICES PROJECT

FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

- The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with information on the Passport Digital Services Project (the Project).
- The primary objective of the Project is to introduce an online application intake channel for the Passport Program, which will improve the Program's integrity and service delivery, enhance client experience and satisfaction, and further promote Canada as a leader in the global travel document community. Following a competitive procurement process, IBM Canada was awarded the contract to develop the solution for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).
- The first step of the Project, is a small-scale controlled pilot for a limited number of domestic passport renewal applicants, scheduled for spring 2021.

BACKGROUND:

- In 2018, in response to changing client expectations, and to keep pace with services offered by the Government of Canada and like-minded states, the Passport Program developed its Digital Services Strategy that details the introduction of an online application, digital support services, and expanded mobile functionality.
- The Project is aligned with the Passport Program Modernization Initiative (PPMI), and is funded through the Passport Revolving Fund.
- The first step in the introduction of digital services to the Passport Program is the development of an online application (the Solution) under the Passport Digital Services Project.
- To minimize the risks associated with any transformational IT project, the first step of the Project is a small-scale controlled pilot of the Solution for domestic passport renewals, slated for late spring 2021. Government employees, beginning with IRCC, will be invited to renew

Canada

their passports online. Focusing on this group will allow the Project to test the Solution with known applicants who have verifiable biometric (photo) and biographic information already in the Passport Program's records.

- To reduce dependency on internal IT resources, the Solution will not initially be integrated into IRCC's processing system the Global Case Management System (GCMS). IRCC employees processing the passport applications will need to manually enter application data into the passport issuance system (GCMS) where all existing checks and verifications using advanced system capacities are conducted on a client's eligibility, identity and entitlement to a Canadian passport.
- The pilot will allow the Program to validate the client experience and solidify user requirements, evaluate business readiness to introduce digital services to the Passport Program, and build the foundational technological components that that will support the future deployment of a digital channel.
- Following the pilot and evaluation of the Project against expected outcomes, the pilot Solution could see an early deployment to support our domestic service delivery partner in the context of a potential post-COVID-19 spike in passport demand. Specifics of how this could occur are still being explored, however, the Project will inform senior management of pilot progress, and proper project governance will be followed to make decisions regarding further expansion of the Passport Digital Services project.

CURRENT STATUS:

- A contract was issued to IBM Canada on December 14, 2020, to develop the Solution for the pilot. Work began in January 2021, with pilot launch scheduled for late spring.
- The procurement approach is aligned with the strategic vision for current and future innovative initiatives being developed by the Transformation and Digital Solutions Sector.
- The Program is taking a user-centric development approach and is currently testing prototypes with users to help ensure that the Project delivers the best possible product to Canadians.
- IRCC is working on completing a privacy impact assessment in advance of the implementation of the pilot.
- The Solution is being developed in accordance with the Government of Canada Protected B, Medium Integrity, Medium Availability (PBMM) control profile for cloud-based services, in order to ensure that cybersecurity risks are minimized. At all times, the sensitive personal information of Canadians will be processed and stored on Canadian-hosted infrastructure, and testing and development of the application will be conducted within Canada.

- The Project has taken steps to mitigate risks to Canadians by ensuring that privacy is incorporated into the design of the application, and through frequent and ongoing consultations with integrity, privacy, and IT security partners.
- As the pilot intake solution is stand alone and not connected to the issuance system, applicant data and photo will need to be manually entered into the Passport issuance system, which has been subject already to all the required security and privacy assessments. The Project team will ensure that the necessary controls are in place to define clear data retention and data disposition requirements for the client side of the pilot intake solution. Further, the Project team will ensure that it retains oversight and audit abilities to ensure that the established controls work as anticipated.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS:

- The Department received a media enquiry on February 2, 2021, into the request for proposal on Buy and Sell, from Radio Canada. The media focus, was on risks to security and privacy, and possible service disruptions. Costs were not mentioned and are not likely to raise concerns since it is funded by passport fees.
- In the pilot phase, a responsive approach is recommended. If the pilot is successful, and this is rolled out more widely, Communications could consider a more proactive strategy, at that time. Currently, communications has approved media lines that were used to respond to the enquiry from Radio Canada and will work on a broader set of key messages to outline the intent of the project, next steps and how we're taking measures to ensure privacy and security and to improve client service.

NEXT STEPS:

- The Department will continue with the development and testing of the Solution.
- IRCC will be meeting with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner in the coming weeks as part of early engagement to identify and mitigate privacy concerns. The launch of the controlled pilot is planned for spring 2021.

e-approved by DMA Xavier on March 11th, 2021

Caroline Xavier
Associate Deputy Minister

Catrina Tapley
Deputy Minister